NATION

When gays are killed, brutality is extraordinary, study finds

Associated Press

NEW YORK — When a killer targets a homosexual, it's more likely that the killing will be extraordinarily brutal and less likely police will solve the case than if a heterosexual were killed, says a study issued Tuesday by a gay rights group.

Nearly 60 percent of 151 anti-gay slayings reported in 29 states involved "extraordinary and horrific violence" of a sort "fueled by rage and hate," said the study, coordinated by the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project.

Although guns are used in 68 percent of killings in the country, only 26 percent of anti-gay killers shot their victims. Knives, baseball bats, clubs and hammers were the weapons of choice, the study said.

The study defined a killing as gay- or lesbian-related "if the victim's sexual orientation appeared to have played a role." Fifty-one percent of such killings have been solved, compared with 65 percent for all homicides, the study said.

The study also said police were "indifferent to gay-lesbian-related homicides" and operated from "a blame-the-victim perspective."

Armond Pelissetti, a homicide inspector for the San Francisco police, said, "There's a tremendous amount of work that goes into these cases. The gay ones don't get any less. . . . But I don't know if that's the case elsewhere. I'm sure there are places elsewhere that are homophobic."

The study was based on three years of murder records, beginning in 1992, but the organization said the figures represent only a small percentage of hate killings of homosexuals because information was provided by volunteer organizations covering only 29 states and the District of Columbia. Also, anti-homosexual violence is underreported because families of some victims try to keep it quiet and police frequently refuse to give details.

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